A PROPHECY.

BY WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Proud word you never spoke, but you will speak
Four not exempt from pride some future day.
Resting on one white hand a warm wet cheek,
Over my open volume you will say,
"This man loved *me!*" then rise and trip away.

The New-York Tribune.

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 1907.

A little essay on "The Fallacy of Specialism" in "The Dial" contains some excellent observations. The writer protests against the familiar assumption that because a man is, for example, a distinguished naturalist, we are justified in taking seriously his "fantastic imaginings" on, say, socialism or astronomy. Even more energetic is the protest against the manner in which specialists are appointed to conduct the instruction in English in our universities. "In nine cases out of ten the instructor's credentials for the performance of his function are supplied by some fragment of technical linguistic investigation or the critical examination of some obscure author or exceptionally barren period of literature." This is bad enough, but as though to turn the whole thing into a grim joke the instructor whose little specialty has won him the opportunity to talk to young students—and to talk generally in vain—on subjects that ought to be made inspiring, carries himself with unspeakable arrogance.

The man who is conscious of knowing more than other scholars about some special subject is pretty apt to magnify his own importance, and to affect (perhaps really to feel) only scorn for those men who believe that breadth of view and philosophical grasp are more to be desired than any of the ends of specialism. He regards himself and his fellow specialists as the only properly accredited members of the guild of scholarship, and has at his command an array of contemptuous epithets for those who pretend to scholarly distinction upon any other basis. Whoever would rashly enter the sacred bounds without a doctoral dissertation for a passport must be sent about his business, must be forced to haunt forever the limbo of amateurs.

It is a just indictment, which should frequently be brought to the attention of those having authority in scholastic matters.

There is nothing like fine writing. It has a charm, superinducing the long, lazy, and comfortable chuckle. We like especially the fine writing of Mr. Arthur Symons. He went to hear Paderewski the other day and in the "Saturday Review" he tells us all about it. He found something magical, soothing, enchanting, about the apparition of this "creature with the tortured Burne-Jones face, level and bewildering eyes, the web of gold hair, still poised like a halo." The performance was superb. It gave the listener "the same kind of joy that you get from Cinquevalli when he juggles with cannon balls," and at the same time it produced sublimer emotions. "Beauty grew up around him like a sudden, exuberant growth." But Mr. Symons is at his best in recalling the meeting that he had with Paderewski on the night of the Jubilee, as follows:

I had gone on foot from the Temple through those packed, gaudy, noisy, and vulgarized streets, through which no vehicles could pass, to a rare and fantastic house at the other end of London, a famous house hospitable to all the arts; and Paderewski sat with closed eyes and played the piano, there in his friend's house, as if he were in his own home. After the music was over, some one said to me, "I feel as if I had been in hell," so profound was the emotion she had experienced from the playing. I would have said heaven rather than hell, for there seemed to be nothing but pure beauty, beauty half asleep and dreaming of itself, in the marvellous playing. A spell, certainly, was over every one, and then the exorciser became human, and jested deliciously till the early morning, when, as I went home through the still garrulous and peopled streets, I saw the last flutter of flags and streamers between night and dawn. All the world had been rioting for pleasure in the gross way of popular demonstrations; and in the very heart of this uproar there had been, for a few people, this divine escape.

We congratulate Mr. Symons on his escape. We congratulate him on his thrilling account of it. We congratulate him all round.

In the course of a sketch of the late Joseph Knight, his friend Mr. Vernon Rendall brings up a point of general interest. "Sometimes," he says, "he regretted that he had not devoted more time to book-writing, though his work in this way was considerable; but the literary cant that looks are the only satisfactory means of expression was never better rebuked than in his career." It is a form of cant that dies hard. Writers who have been happy in earning an honest living through contributions to the newspapers and magazines find themselves in a position to make a book. It may be good; it may be of no consequence whatever. But it does not matter. The man who has thus once tasted blood is thenceforth incorrigible. The spark of vanity in his breast, which might perhaps have remained only a spark, is fanned into a flame and he begins to entertain queer ideas. He is now an "artist," and above all things "original." Like the illustrator who is ambitious to paint pictures or decorations, he looks askance at the work to which he has hitherto been devoted. Sometimes, if there is ability at the bottom of all his nonsense, he outgrows that nonsense and becomes an artist in the true sense. But pathetically often he develops into a mongrel type, producing nothing good between covers or anywhere else.

LADY MARY.

The New Story of a Strange Courtship.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU. By George Paston. With twenty-four Illustrations. 8vo, pp. 559. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

That there could remain anything new to be said about the career of the brilliant Mary Wortley Montagu has seemed unlikely. But something new the writer known as George Paston has discovered among the Wortley Montagu manuscripts at Sandon Hall. Upward of a hundred unpublished letters from the hand of Lady Mary and fifty or sixty written by Wortley Montagu are included in the mass of highly interesting correspondence of the early eighteenth century. These letters have considerably enlivened an oft repeated tale and have provided a curious picture of courtship in the days of Queen Anne. No more extraordinary correspondence, it is certain, ever passed between two lovers than that between this clever, cold hearted grandson of the first Earl of Sandwich and the beautiful young daughter of Lord Kingston.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.
(From a miniature.)

Beautiful she was in her girlhood, this Lady Mary Pierrepont, but it was her wit, intelligence and unusual learning which most struck the young man at his first meeting with his sister Anne's friend. There is an unpublished fragment of autobiography in which Mary, under the fanciful name of "Lætitia," describes the beginning of her acquaintance with "Sebastian":

She was then but newly entered into her teens, but never being tall, had already attained the height she always had, and her person was in all the childish bloom of that age. Sebastian, who seriously designed upon the fortune of Mlle. ——, who was three years older, proposed nothing by coming there but an occasion of obliging her, and being at that time near thirty, did not expect much conversation among a set of romps. Tea came in before cards, and a new play being then acted, it was the first thing mentioned, on which Lætitia took occasion to criticise in a manner so just and so knowing, he was as much amazed as if he had heard a piece of waxwork talk on that subject. This led them into a discourse of Poetry, and he was still more astonished to find her not only well read in the moderns, but that there was hardly any beautiful passage in the classics she did not remember, this was striking him in the most sensible manner. He was a thorough scholar, and rather an admirer than an admirer of learning. The conversation grew so eager on both sides neither cards nor Mlle. were thought upon, and she was forced to call on him several times before she could prevail on him to go toward the table. When he did it was only to continue his discourse with Lætitia, and she had the full pleasure of triumphing over Mlle., who was forced to be silent while they talked about what she could not understand. This day put an end to his inclination ever to see her again, and his admiration [for Lætitia] was so visible that his sisters (who are generally ready to make court to an elder brother) made all sorts of advances of friendship to Lætitia, who received them very obligingly, and the acquaintance was very soon made.

Sister Anne was ostensibly Mary's correspondent at first, but the big brother soon made her office only that of a secretary. Literature, languages, and now and then more sentimental themes were discussed. Sebastian grew more and more pleased with the lady's mind and, after some months, proposed for her hand. Papa had no objection to make to so eligible a suitor and all was going well when the two men fell out on the question of settlements. It was during the two years that intervened between this unfortunate episode and the runaway marriage of Lady Mary and her swain that the curious letters we have mentioned were exchanged by the pair. It is difficult to understand how an admired, intellectual, and affectionate girl could have long endured the vain, mean, and grudging tone of the man's epistles. Little that she could say or do suited him—wilful misinterpretation and disapproval, jealousy and frigidity alternated with neglect. He was in doubt about her fortune and more anxious that she should declare for love than to commit himself. He was continually accusing her of unkind and insincere motives. Over and over in various phrases he suggests that they shall think no more of one another:—"I own it will not grieve me much to know you have quite laid aside the thought of me." "After all be assured you do not like me. I would rather you would find proofs of it yourself; if you do not I hope I shall convince you. The sooner I do this the better for us both." He would answer a tender protestation from her by recommending a rival suitor and would produce absurd inventions as a foundation for sneers. He apparently took as much pains to estrange the fair as another might to capture her. Yet he continued to hanker after her and could not let her alone. Lady Mary, on her side, bore marvellously with his ill nature, but now and then rebelled, sending him an eternal farewell in good set terms and at great length—but the eternal farewell meant merely the beginning of a new paragraph in their love story. At the end of the two years her father ordered her to accept another man and the girl grew desperate as she saw all roads of escape closing before her, and the man she had loved so long still indisposed to tie himself down for life. "If you are in doubt what to do," he wrote, "I am very certain you ought to be against me:—

It was a great piece of folly in me to persist in leaving it for you to decide, after you had assured me you did not value me much. You know I have formerly broke with you on this point. All your letters of late have implied the contrary of what you said, or I could not have determined at last as I did. . . . However, I do not intend to go back from my word (whatever low opinion you may have of me). If I should not be so easy with you as I should have been with some other, you will be a sufferer as much as I, probably a great deal more. I repeat it, you judge very ill, if you take such a one, if you like him no better, but take me if you please.

I have fairly told you any real or seeming infirmity of mine which you might not have known without my making discovery. If there is any defect which can possibly give me a distaste, you ought to tell it for your own sake, before we are tied. Some faults I could knowingly suffer, and yet be in the utmost concern when I am deceived or disappointed.

And then comes up the remembrance of the rival, "whom, after all," adds this queer lover, "I advise you to close with and to marry this very day without giving me notice of it, unless you are entirely convinced I can have no reason to complain of your want of kindness." A few days afterward Mr. Wortley Montagu sent Lady Mary the only real love letter of the collection, opening his apology for a heart in a fashion which for him was enthusiastic. It was not without effort that he permitted himself to be thus expansive, for, as the biographer tells us, almost every sentence in the rough draft is rewritten two or three times. Their elopement and secret marriage promptly followed the receipt of this letter.

Lady Mary did not find her married life particularly happy. Everything goes to show that in its earlier years she was a thoroughly good wife, tender and considerate, careful of her husband's feelings and dignity, anxious to make him comfortable in his own penurious way, and as busy about her housekeeping as in her reading. She did not often complain of her somewhat narrow life in small furnished houses in the country, though so sparkling and cultivated a young matron might reasonably have wished to shine in society; but she did complain bitterly of the neglect with which he treated her during his absences in London on politics or business. Weeks, even months went by without a letter from him coming down into Yorkshire. At last she protested in a very womanly letter. "I am very sensible," she says, "I parted from you in July and 'tis now the middle of November. As if this was not hardship enough, you do not tell me you are sorry for it. You write seldom and with so much indifference as shews you hardly think of me at all. I complain of ill health, and you only say you hope 'tis not so bad as I make it. You never enquire after your child." The truth is that the husband was selfish and cold by nature and ill matched with a woman warm of heart and impetuous in disposition. As extraordinary as their courtship was their relation in the last twenty years of their marriage, which were spent by Lady Mary on the Continent and by Wortley Montagu in England. There was apparently no quarrel. They exchanged friendly letters, Lady Mary, indeed, keeping her lord pleasantly informed of the incidents of her daily life in Italy and France and now and then receiving his advice as to her movements and consulting with him as to their dealings with their ne'er-do-well son. But there was no question of their meeting, and when the husband went abroad for health's sake his wife was not informed of it until he had returned to England. The unpublished papers, we are told, throw no light upon this separation. Lady Louisa Stuart, the child of their delightful daughter, Lady Bute, has probably presented the truth of the matter in pointing out the likelihood of their quietly and deliberately determining to live apart without consulting the opinions of other people. She says:

It admits of little doubt that their dispositions were unsuitable and Mr. Wortley had sensibly felt it even while a lover. When at length convinced that in their case the approach of age would not have the harmonizing effect which it has been sometimes known to produce upon minds originally but ill assorted, he was the very man to think within himself: "If we cannot add to each other's happiness, why should we do the reverse? Let us be the friends at a distance which we could not hope to remain by continuing unequally yoked together."

The experiences of the exiled English woman in her various Continental homes, as well as her life in London, and in Turkey when Wortley Montagu was Ambassador there, are described at some length in this volume—chiefly, of course, in extracts from her always entertaining letters. A chapter is devoted to the relentless enmity manifested toward his once admired divinity by that very contemptible person, Mr. Alexander Pope. What did Lady Mary do to the malignant little cripple to make him pursue her with such brutal public attacks for ten long years? It is a family tradition that he once treated her to a sentimental declaration and that she laughed at him—hence his wrath. Whatever may have been the cause the result was an ineffaceable blot upon the memory of a man of genius—a man who in this case, and whatever the fault of the lady, was a base cur. Horace Walpole was another hearty hater of Lady Mary, writing of her with a sour malice which would seem to show some unacknowledged motive behind it. George Paston takes what is, on the whole, an amiable view of Lady Mary's character and her career, believing that what follies and indiscretions were hers were magnified and multiplied by her enemies, "the many enemies that she had made by her bitter tongue, her dangerous pen and her difficult temper." All that was bitter, dangerous and difficult in her might never, perhaps, have been developed if the man she married had been able to satisfy her heart and to cherish her rare abilities. Her early letters show that she was by nature generous, kind and high-minded.

George Paston is a compiler and commentator of agreeable quality, and this book is as entertaining as its predecessors. It may be of real value in leading the reader to a closer study of a fascinating period. The numerous portraits which accompany the text are interesting in themselves, though not particularly attractive reproductions.

GLIMPSES OF BAUDELAIRE.

He Loathed Nature and Loved Invention.

From The London Times.

Baudelaire had a horror of the ideas of romanticism. He loathed nature. She was the mire and slime out of which man has painfully crept at last, the savagery to look back upon which is to be turned into a pillar of salt. There is something religious in his horror of Cybele and her altars. All his poetry is a constant sacrifice of nature to ingenious inventions. There is scarcely a description of a landscape in his writings. He owned himself incapable of "melting into tears over vegetables," and avowed his contempt for "des légumes sacrifiés." He writes in a letter to Desnoyers: "Mon âme s'est rebelle à cette singulière religion nouvelle qui aura toujours, ce me semble, pour tout esprit spirituel, je ne sais quoi de shocking" ("Lettres," page 72). Nature appeared to him "impudent." He thought that man had surpassed her humble needs, and, in his ultra-natural superiority, desired a beauty which should produce in the mind not that beatific calm, that delight of satisfied acceptance (which is the classic ideal), but a pang of surprise and ravishment, a sense of rarity and strangeness. Baudelaire frankly admitted his passion for the artificial. "Tout ce qui éloignait l'homme, et surtout la femme, de l'état de nature, lui paraissait une invention heureuse" (we are quoting Gautier's famous preface) " . . . signe de la volonté humaine corrigeant à son gré les formes et les couleurs fournies par la matière" (and if we remember right, in support of this theory, once he dyed his own brown curls a light green). Baudelaire certainly cannot be taken as a prophet of the return to nature.

AN OLD DEVICE IN LANGUAGE.

From The London Chronicle.

The "ap" language, of which so much has been heard in the Gaiety Girl case, is only a development of a very old device, the simplest form of which consisted of adding the same consonant to the end of every word. According to Grose, such "language" was technically known as "gibberish," and Hotten records that schoolboys spoke of "the G gibberish" or "the L gibberish," in which "How do you do?" would appear as "Howg dog youg dog?" and "How! do youl dol?" respectively. "Howvis dovis youvis dovis?" was a more elaborate form, and French schoolboys trisyllabically said, "Vousisvous esdregue undregue foudregue" for "Vous me un fou." In 1830 "smart" Parisians tacked "mar" on to everything—"cafemar" for "café," and in 1823, when the diorama was the craze, everything ended in "rama."